

Celebrating Motherly Love May 9th, 2021

We begin our message today with a short dramatized reading from Ellie Shantz and Mary Ann Klein

(insert “The Secret Recepte”)

I hope you enjoyed that. I’m pretty sure that Mary Ann enjoyed playing God!

But you know, I’m not sure about those 160 moveable parts – some days mine don’t move so well!

As we think about Mother’s Day, I find myself wondering what it must have been like to be the mother of Jesus? In the protestant faith, we don’t often think about Mary – but it must have been a huge responsibility being the mother of the Son of God! What a role to fill!

I don’t think Mary jumped on a trampoline with Jesus, or rode a bicycle with him. But I am sure that she must of spent time playing with him. A popular toy in those days would have been a ball made of leather strips, so perhaps Mary played catch with Jesus.

And, like our video, I expect when Jesus was young Mary probably spent time cooking with him. Maybe she taught him how to make unleavened bread, or her favorite Lentil recipe that she had learned from her mother.

And, I imagine that Jesus would frequently curl up on Mary’s lap and she might sing to him, tell him stories, teach him scripture, and most certainly pray with him.

But I think Jesus must have been a bit of handful too. Like all little boys, he probably had grazed knees that Mary would need to kiss and heal. And we know that he had a habit of wandering off – like the time that he went off to the temple on his own. If any of you have ever temporarily lost a child in a department store, like I did, then you can understand how Mary must have felt. So we know that Mary must have needed to have at least 3 pairs of eyes!

And as Jesus grew older, I suspect that he caused his mother a lot of anxiety. I mean he wandered around with no job, no income, nowhere to live. Even with all the faith in the world, I imagine that Mary probably hoped that Jesus would follow in Joseph's footsteps and become a carpenter – a good steady job!

Years ago, when I chose to make my living as a freelance storyteller, choosing to travel the world to tell stories, I remember my mother saying to me: "Can't you get a proper job with a steady income and security?" - and I wonder if Mary ever said the same thing to Jesus?

And of course, we also know for sure that as the Mother of Jesus, Mary's heart was broken. She wept bitterly as she watched her son suffer the brutal death of crucifixion.

Being a mother isn't easy.

And, Mother's day isn't always a joyous day of celebration for everyone:

- We need to remember that there are many that find this day difficult because they grieve the loss of their mothers – especially in this time of Covid when so many have died alone and not surrounded by families.

- We need to acknowledge that there are some people that never had a mother figure in their lives, or perhaps had a difficult relationship with their mother.

- We need to advocate for those that have been forcefully separated from their mothers. In January 2020 an official government report declared that the official number of children separated from their parents or guardians at the US/Mexico border was 4,368. Children were literally pulled from the arms of their mothers.

- And we need to respect that all families are different. There are some that choose not to have children, and some that long to have children, but are unable.

I confess that Mother's Day is not always an easy day for me.

Although I have been blessed with a wonderful son, I too know the grief of losing an unborn child. I too understand what it is like to lose your mother – I lost my mother 18 years ago. And I also understand how difficult it is to have a somewhat difficult relationship with your mother. My mother and I didn't always see eye to eye, and didn't have the kind of mother-daughter relationship that we celebrate

on Mother's day. But, despite that, when my mother passed away, the deepest feeling that I had was one of LOVE.

Mother's Day can be a difficult day – but it is a day that we need to focus on love.

Love of mothers

Love of caregivers,

Love of our parent God.

Our beautiful collection of scriptures and prayers today, was full of ways that we can describe God in a maternal way. Our world tends to be dominated by images of God as a father, and the images of the nurturing, caring God who holds us, grieves with us and laughs with us are less common. But the images in our scriptures today reminds us of the ways in which God is just like a mother. The descriptions included:

Comforting

Compassionate

Calming

Caring

Protecting

Embracing

Sheltering

Teaching

Encouraging

Sustaining

Everlasting

Wow! That's quite the list! It's no wonder that God had to work so hard on the prototype for a Mother.

And, I would add to this list that:

- like a Mother, God knows how to delight us – whether we are young children, teenagers, in our middle years, or a bit older. God always knows what is best for us, and what will bring us joy.

- like a Mother, God knows how to forgive us, and forgets when we make mistakes, which we all know that we do.
- like a Mother, God feels our pain and cries when we are hurting or lost
- like a Mother, God lets us fly free, but is always there to catch us when we fall down
- And, perhaps most importantly, like a mother, God always loves us unconditionally.

So, this Mother's Day, as we celebrate Motherly love – let us all remember the maternal nature of God, and know that we are all loved by the Holy One, Mother of us all. Amen.

See: <https://godspacelight.com/2015/05/04/meditation-monday-connecting-to-the-mother-heart-of-god/>